



Resource Guide for Stakeholders and Highly Educated Refugees

California Department of Social Services

Refugee Programs Bureau

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PURPOSE

The California Department of Social Services, Refugee Programs Bureau, created this Resource Guide to help stakeholders and professional refugees as they seek to capitalize on the skills, experience, and motivation of California's professional refugee and immigrant population to strengthen our state. When talented refugees are provided opportunities to use their potential, everyone wins.

As documented in the Migration Policy Institute's 2008 report, [Uneven Progress: The Employment Pathways of Skilled Immigrants in the United States](#), many foreign born professionals are significantly underemployed in semi-skilled jobs. This reflects the worst of outcomes, as their home countries suffer the "brain drain" of sending these talented workers abroad, while the U.S. allows widespread "brain waste" of many legal, work-authorized new arrivals.

INTRODUCTION

This Guide is useful to stakeholders, including service providers, collaborators and partners, and professional refugees themselves. Pages one and two provide information about barriers professional refugees face. Tools are provided to assess backgrounds and goals of professional refugees in order to create a plan to return to their former professions.

The Data, Research, and Reports sections provide information to

stakeholders to understand the scope and impact of under-employed professionals who are not reaching their full potentials. The Webinars and Power Point sections give stakeholders an opportunity to learn the latest information from practitioners in the field.

The remainder of the guide provides practical resources to locate a program, seek educational funding and scholarships, review recertification guides, locate English language training and educational institutions, find networking and mentoring opportunities, and read of successes of other highly refugees who were once in the same situation

WHAT ARE THE GOALS?

This resource guide was created to assist stakeholders to address under-employed professionals and link them to appropriate resources.

KEY BARRIERS

Among the key barriers professional refugees face are:

- Lack of access to critical information: practical advice on career re-entry options; help in obtaining a reputable evaluation of their international degree, and skilled and experienced guidance on how to acculturate to the American workplace;
- Complex and difficult-to-navigate licensing and certification pathways;

- Limited access to higher-level vocational and Business English classes that go beyond the basic English offered in community classes;
- Resources for education and work are limited because providing for their families becomes a priority;
- Lack of “Made in America” education and work experience;
- Lack of family/employer engagement/incentives;
- Need for mental health counseling;
- Lack of professional networks and social capital needed for a successful job search; and
- Lack of mentoring and need for a personal sponsor/coach.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

By assessing the individual’s educational background, stakeholders are able to identify the level of education and skills of the refugees.

INDIVIDUAL SERVICE PLAN

The creation of an Individual Service Plan (ISP) ensures that individuals make the appropriate choices, set goals to achieve an education to return to their former professions. (sampleISP).

LINKING TO RESOURCES

Once participants have been assessed and assisted to develop an individual service plan, stakeholders should link refugees with resources so that they can start their journey to self-sufficiency.

EDUCATIONAL ADVANCEMENT

The provision of educational opportunities is one of the highest priorities for professional refugees as education is an important tool in achieving cultural inclusion, academic success and self-sufficiency.

FOLLOW UP AND PAYING BACK

In addition to linking them with the resources, there should be a follow up and an engaging expectation on the refugee professional to pay back by assisting the professional refugee community and serving as a catalyst for the economy.

Below are data, research and reports, program models, webinars and power point presentations, funding and scholarships, recertification guides, English training and adult education resources, mentoring and networking opportunities and success stories for professional refugees and stakeholders to use to address this critical situation.



DATA

1. American Immigration Council, "[New Americans in California](#) - The Political and Economic Power of Immigrants, Latinos, and Asians in the Golden State", 2015.
2. National Skills Coalition, "New fact sheets: [Immigrants can help meet demand for middle-skill workers in Arizona and California](#)", 2016.

U.S. States with the Largest College-Educated Foreign-Born Population, 2014

State	Native Born	Foreign Born	State Share of U.S. Foreign-Born Population (%)
California	5,626,000	2,487,000	23.8
New York	3,535,000	1,159,000	11.1
Florida	2,953,000	873,000	8.4
Texas	3,881,000	869,000	8.3
New Jersey	1,644,000	636,000	6.1
Illinois	2,372,000	476,000	4.6
Virginia	1,682,000	344,000	3.3
Massachusetts	1,600,000	323,000	3.1
Maryland	1,232,000	316,000	3.0
Washington	1,325,000	255,000	2.4
United States	53,632,000	10,452,000	100.0

Source: MPI tabulation of data from the U.S. Census Bureau 2014 ACS

Immigrant Share (%) of Employed College-Educated Workers
by Occupational Group, 2014

OCCUPATION	SHARE OF TOTAL
All occupations	16
Computer/Mathematical	32
Health-care support	30
Physicians/Dentists/Surgeons	26
Other sciences/Engineering	24
Construction/Extraction/Transportation	23
Manufacturing/Installation/Repair	22
Registered nurses	20
Other service/Personal care	20
Other health-care practitioners	14
Management/Business/Finance	14
Sales	14
Administrative support	14
Farming/Fishing/Forestry	12
Education/Training/Media	11
Social service/Legal	8

Source: MPI tabulation of data from the U.S. Census Bureau 2014 ACS.

RESEARCH AND REPORTS

1. World Education Services (WES), "[Steps to Success: Integrating Immigrant Professionals in the U.S.](#)", 2015.
2. WES, "[Best Practices: Strategies and Processes to Obtain Authentic International Education Credentials](#)", 2012.
3. WES, "[Recognizing Refugee Qualifications: Practical Tips for Credential Assessment](#)", 2016.
4. [Migration and Policy Institute's main webpage](#) with links to research, reports, and other extensive information about immigration topics.

5. Migration Policy Institute, "[Brain Waste in the Workforce: Select U.S. and State Characteristics of College-Educated Native-Born and Immigrant Adults](#)", 2013.
6. WE Global Network, "[Integrating Highly-Skilled Immigrants and Refugees](#)", 2015.
7. US National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health, "[Promoters and barriers to work: a comparative study of refugees versus immigrants in the United States](#)", 2015.
8. US News and World Reports, "[For Iraqi Refugees in America, the Recession Makes It Even Harder to Find Jobs](#)", 2008.
9. The RAND Corporation, "[Policy Solutions to Address the Foreign-Educated and Foreign-Born Health Care Workforce in the United States](#)", 2013.
10. [Immigrant Professional Integration \(IMPRINT\)](#) – various publications and articles.
11. One America, "Reducing Brain Waste: Creating Career Pathways for Foreign-Educated Immigrants in Washington State", 2015.
12. [A City of Immigrant Workers: Building a Workforce Strategy to Support All New Yorkers](#).
13. [Rx for Strengthening Massachusetts' Economy and Healthcare System: A Report by the Governor's Advisory Council for Refugees and Immigrants, Task force on Immigration Healthcare Professionals in Massachusetts](#).

WEBINARS AND POWER POINT PRESENTATIONS

1. WES, "[The Syrian Refugee Crisis: Methods for Credential Assessment](#)", 2016.
2. WES, "[Supporting the Success of Skilled Immigrants](#)", 2016.
3. IMPRINT, "[Helping Immigrants Build Social Capital to Achieve Professional Success](#)", 2015.
4. IMPRINT, "[Integrating Immigrant Health Professionals: A Program Model](#)", 2013.
5. IMPRINT, "[Advancing the Immigrant Integration Agenda: A follow-up from the White House Task Force on New Americans](#)".

6. Global Talent Bridge, "[Resources and Tools for Advising Immigrant and Refugee Professionals](#)", 2012.
7. Global Talent Search, "[Pathways to Success Webinars](#)".
8. The [United States Department of Labor](#), extensive information on labor market data, job and career information, and a resource library, and other information.
9. World Education News and Review, "[Providing Pathways for Refugees: Practical Tips for Credential Assessment](#)", 2016.

PROGRAM MODELS FOR ASSISTING PROFESSIONAL REFUGEES

Though some of the program models below are outside of California, professional refugees are known to relocate for better opportunities. Also, they can be used as examples of successful programs for replication in local communities.

California Programs

1. Strategically positioned within the City of San Jose Office of Economic Development, [work2future](#) addresses the workforce and economic development needs of the local area, in collaboration with small and large businesses, educational institutions and community-based organizations.
2. [The Welcome Back Center \(San Diego\)](#) was developed to aid internationally trained healthcare workers that have moved to California. It offers a wide range of services to immigrant healthcare workers who wish to obtain professional credentials. There is a growing need to provide linguistically and culturally-competent healthcare to many areas of the U.S.
3. [The PARS Equality Center in Santa Clara County](#), California, provides mentoring and career development services for participants with a minimum of a Bachelor's degree and who have been in the U.S. for less than five years.
4. [ImmigrantInfo.org](#) is a collaborative project, sponsored by the Santa Clara County Office of Immigrant Relations and the South Bay Consortium of Adult Education. <http://immigrantinfo.org/>

Other State and National Programs

1. [The Foreign Trained Professional Recertification Program \(Minnesota\)](#) funded in part by the Administration for Children and Families, Office of Refugee Resettlement, is for refugees who have lived in the U.S. less than five years. The Program is provided by Women's Initiative for Self-Empowerment (WISE) in partnership with the African and American Friendship Association for Cooperation and Development.
2. [WES](#), founded in 1974, is a national non-profit organization dedicated to helping people with international education achieve their higher education and professional goals by evaluating and advocating for the recognition of international education qualifications.
3. [Upwardly Global \(UpGlo\)](#) is a national non-profit organization that helps work-authorized, skilled immigrants rebuild their professional careers in the U.S. UpGlo provides professional job-search training and access to employers with global talent needs.
4. [WES' website](#) lists programs around the country that provide services for immigrant professionals, as well as online resources.
5. The Biotechnology Program at Bluegrass Community and Technical College in Lexington, Kentucky, trains a diverse group of students who use the certificate and/or degree programs as an essential step along their academic pathway leading to a variety of studies: health-related professions (Medical, Veterinary, Pharmacy, Dentistry, Optometry, research/development, environmental science, and education).
6. [The Cooper Union's Retraining Program for Immigrant Engineers \(New York\)](#) provides admitted participants the opportunity to update their skills and work in their chosen fields by offering them professional courses and job placement assistance free of charge.
7. [The New American Alliance \(Minnesota\)](#) provides education and services to empower migrants/refugees to be fully integrated into Minnesota's growth and development. It represents over 200 foreign trained physicians, nurses and other health care people to become licensed professionals in their new country.
8. [REACH - Skilled Newcomer Career Services \(Nashville, Tennessee\)](#), eliminates employment barriers for skilled new Americans and integrates this population into the professional U.S. workforce.

9. [The New Hampshire Health Profession Opportunity Project \(HPOP\)](#) is a five-year initiative led by the New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health and Refugee Affairs. The HPOP's goal is to increase workforce training opportunities for low-income individuals who desire training in healthcare occupations.
10. [The Foreign Physician Alternative Certification Program \(Florida\)](#) provides orientation, assistance and training to foreign health care professionals living in the U.S. The program offers two tracks. One provides foreign physicians the opportunity to train and study for licensure to work as practicing medical doctors in the U.S. The other track provides retraining for foreign health care professionals to obtain degrees in other in-demand medical careers such as in nursing, medical lab technology, respiratory care, sonography, and teaching, among others.

RECERTIFICATION RESOURCES

Physicians

1. [Physician Assistant Licensure Requirements](#) for International Medical Graduates.
2. [Medical Schools Recognized by the Medical Board of California](#). To be eligible for a Postgraduate Training Authorization Letter or Physician's and Surgeon's license, applicants must have received all of their medical school education from and graduated from a medical school recognized or approved by the Medical Board of California. The medical school's name must exactly match the name on the Board's list of recognized medical schools.

Nurses

3. [A Licensing Guide for International Registered Nurses](#).



High-demand Regulated Professions

4. The Professional Licensing Guides were created to help understand all of the steps required to earn a state professional license or credential to return to the full practice of a regulated profession.

<u>Accountant</u>	<u>Architect</u>	<u>Dentist</u>	<u>Engineer</u>
<u>IT Professional</u>	<u>Lawyer</u>	<u>Nurse</u>	<u>Pharmacist</u>
<u>Physical Therapist</u>	<u>Physician</u>	<u>Teacher</u>	

Credential Evaluation

5. [International Education Research Foundation \(IERF\)](#), the pioneer in credentials evaluation services, was established in 1969. IERF is a non-profit, public-benefit agency in the State of California that conducts research on international education and prepares credentials evaluations for persons that have studied outside of the United States and need a statement of educational equivalency.

Recertification

6. [The Office of Refugee Resettlement](#)'s website provides information on four aspects of recertification that should be considered in order for refugee professionals to become licensed in the U.S.
7. [Resources from IMPRINT](#), including community college, career and licensing guides, a resume template and a tool kit for practitioners.
8. A publication from the Welcoming Center for New Pennsylvanians, "[How to Succeed in the Workplace: A Career Guide for the Immigrant Professional](#)".

INTERNSHIPS AND APPRENTICESHIPS

1. [California State University, San Bernardino](#), Career Center, Internship and Research Network.
2. 2016 [Internships in California](#).
3. [Internships in Los Angeles and other national cities](#).
4. [Credentials Center](#).
5. [U.S. Department of Labor](#).

FUNDING, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND FELLOWSHIPS

Funding

1. The [Institute of International Education](#) will be in the inaugural cohort of non-profit and government organizations to participate in the new program, Coursera for Refugees launched by the U.S. Department of State and will enable an unlimited number of non-profits that work with refugees to apply for at least one year of group financial aid.
2. The [University of Southern California Marshall MBA program](#) provides scholarships up to \$45,000 available for two highly-qualified Myanmar students.
3. The [International Rescue Committee](#) in San Jose announces that funding is available for clients interested in attending vocational schools in programs such as nursing or truck driving. Call or come to the office for more information: International Rescue Committee, 1210 South Bascom Ave. #227, San Jose, CA, 95128, (408) 277-0255.
4. [United States Department of Education – Student Loans and Grants.](#)

Scholarships

5. [Scholarships.com](#) will search millions of scholarships and grants to match users with scholarships, grants and other financial aid.
6. [Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights Scholarship Guide](#). ICIRR is dedicated to promoting the rights of immigrants and refugees to full and equal participation in the civic, cultural, social, and political life of our diverse society.

http://www.icirr.org/content/documents/new_scholarship_guide_fall_2016.pdf

Fellowships

7. The [Graduate Assistance in Areas of National Need](#) program provides fellowships through graduate academic departments, programs, and units of institutions of higher education to graduate students of superior ability who demonstrate financial need and plan to pursue the highest possible degree available in their field of study.

Medical Residency Information

1. The [National Resident Matching Program](#) is a private, non-profit organization established in 1952 at the request of medical students to provide an orderly and fair mechanism for matching the preferences of applicants for U.S. residency positions with the preferences of residency program directors.
2. The [American Academy of Family Physicians](#) offers the only comprehensive residency directory that allows you to search family medicine residency programs by location, community setting, residency program type, program size, and more.
3. This program focuses on [International Medical Graduates \(IMG\)](#) from Latin America or a Spanish-speaking country interested in obtaining residency training in Family Medicine and a medical license to practice in California. The goal of the UCLA IMG program is to provide bilingual (English-Spanish) family physicians for the state's underserved rural and urban communities which include large Hispanic and other vulnerable populations.
4. [ResidentSwap.org](#) works in four ways: 1) lists currently vacant residency spots, as posted directly by residency programs, 2) anonymously lists spots currently filled by residents who would like to swap location or specialty with another resident, 3) frequently monitors websites that publicly advertise residency vacancies and immediately sends alerts to your email or cell phone whenever new spots open, and 4) "Together Anywhere" mode, designed for couples, locates two spots in close geographical proximity to each other.
5. [American Medical Association Residency Database](#).

MENTORING AND NETWORKING OPPORTUNITES

Healthcare

1. [Nursing Network](#) is a professional network connecting nurses with the groups they belong to, colleagues they support, and resources they need.
2. [County of San Diego Funds Training to Help Refugees Enter Healthcare Workforce](#).



Business

3. Founded in 1995, [Asian Women in Business](#) (AWIB) is a non-profit, tax-exempt organization with the primary mission of assisting Asian women entrepreneurs and professionals. Over the years, AWIB, a dynamic organization, has expanded its mission to address issues affecting Asian Americans on the corporate level; and Asian women in the legal arena; and has established a scholarship program for undergraduates which promotes and rewards demonstrated leadership. AWIB also serves on various task forces and boards to promote the inclusion of minority and women owned businesses and professionals.

ENGLISH TRAINING RESOURCES FOR REFUGEE PROFESSIONALS

California Resources – On campus Programs

1. [University of Californian \(UC\) Davis Extension – Center for International Education](#) – English programs for professionals.
2. [UC Santa Cruz: Silicon Valley Campus - Communication Skills for Foreign-born Professionals](#).
3. [University of California, San Diego Extension International Programs](#) offers English language, university credit, customized, and professional certificate programs for personal, academic, and professional development.
4. The [English as a Second Language \(ESL\) Program at San Diego Continuing Education](#) includes free general classes, offered at eight campuses and many other locations in the community. There are morning, afternoon, and evening classes at seven different levels, from beginning to advanced. The ESL program also has free Computer Labs, Special Classes, Transition to College, Vocational ESL (VESL), and Citizenship classes.
5. [Institute of International Education – Intensive English Programs in California](#).

On-line Resources

6. [Georgia Tech Language Institute](#) – on-line course: “Improve Your English Communication Skills”, helps improve professional communication in English for successful business interactions.

7. [Higher Advantage.org](http://HigherAdvantage.org) offers an array of free on-line training modules that will help prepare new Americans who are seeking work or looking to advance in their careers. Higher offers recertification resources accessible to foreign-trained professionals in the U.S.
8. [Canvas Network](#) offers a free an online course for intermediate-level English language learners who are currently working or studying in the nursing field. The focus of this course will be on developing English for use in the workplace. Students will meet and learn with colleagues from around the world to study key words, phrases, and grammar topics; practice listening; and apply learning. Click on the Canvas Network logo and select “search our catalog”.
9. [Exercises for doctors and other health-care professionals looking to practice medical terminology or to speak to patients in a more natural way.](#)
10. [New York Public Library on-line English learning resources.](#)
11. A comprehensive list of [Upwardly Global's curricula and courses.](#)
12. [English Health Train](#) is a unique, innovative curriculum aimed at improving the English communication skills, career potential, and confidence level of immigrants trained as health professionals in their own country or interested in entering the health care field. The extensive curriculum and classroom materials were designed, developed, and piloted in 2004-2006 through the San Francisco Welcome Back Center.

ADULT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Vocational and Trade Schools

1. [Vocational and trade school](#) educations are popular vehicles for students who want to fast-track into well-paid highly skilled careers. Vocational training is also perfect for adult students looking to advance in their current career or even change careers altogether.

Occupational Centers

2. [Northern Region Occupational Center.](#)
3. [Southern Region Occupational Center.](#)

CALIFORNIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND PUBLIC AND PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

1. [California Community Colleges.](#)
2. [California State Universities.](#)
3. [University of California Campuses.](#)
4. [The 2017 Top California Private Universities.](#)

SUCCESS STORIES

1. [Coastal Engineer from Vietnam is Proud to Protect California Coastline.](#)
2. [From Apprentice to Employee - How Upwardly Global Program Changed the Life of a Foreign-Trained Engineer.](#)
3. [Colombian Physician Starts Again.](#)
4. [IT Skills Come in Handy at a National Department Store Chain.](#)
5. [A Role Model of Accomplishment for Women and Girls around the World.](#)
6. [Studying for a Master's degree at The City College of New York in Civil Engineering.](#)
7. [Dreamt of Becoming a Successful Business Woman.](#)
8. [She worked as a Registered Nurse in Haiti for 7 years.](#)
9. [Growing up in Ghana, I dreamed of becoming a pharmacist.](#)

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